



Seaton Town Council Strategic Town Plan 2021 - 2026

Adopted: 1 November 2021

Reviewed & updated: 4 April 2022

Seaton Town Council Vision

Seaton Town Council values its community, heritage, environment, beach and open spaces. It will work towards improving the social and economic wellbeing of the town's community as it emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic and, where possible, strive to work in partnership with other stakeholders to develop and enhance the town's assets for the benefit of the community and visitors.

1. Why have a Strategic Plan?

The strategic town plan ('the Plan') has been adopted by Seaton Town Council ('the Council') and details its aims and objectives for 2021 - 2026. It is a living document that will be reviewed and updated regularly by the Council, taking into account prevailing financial and other circumstances at the time.

Over recent years, the Council has established its priorities for the coming year but has lacked longer-term plans that make realistic provision for preserving and maintaining existing assets, whilst gradually building resilience to deliver other projects. This has, on occasions, led to projects being embarked upon that were neither financially deliverable or realistic. It is the view of the existing members of the Council that such a plan is essential for the town to evolve and best serve residents, business owners and visitors.

2. How was the Plan developed?

The Plan arose from a community consultation in August 2021 which was carried out to enable the Council to understand issues that are important to residents, businesses and visitors to Seaton, whilst balancing those aspirations against available resources. Like any organization, the Council needs to forward plan its activities and associated budgets to achieve best value for all. It is hoped that this Plan will help determine how the Council's limited resources are allocated and enable a cohesive partnership approach to delivery of services.

3. Who is the Council?

Councillors

The Council is made up of 12 elected and co-opted Councillors who offer their time voluntarily and work collectively on behalf of the community with the aim of improving the service provided, thereby making a difference to residents' daily lives. The current Councillors will serve until the next local council elections in May 2023. This Plan is intended to provide realistic short and longer term aims that may be delivered by the Council and built-on by future administrations.

The Council meets monthly on the first Monday in the Council Chamber at the Marshlands Centre on Harbour Road. These meetings are open to members of the public and provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Council at the start of the meetings. All decisions taken by the Council are voted on within such meetings, and it is only those decisions made by the whole Council which are legally binding.

Staff

The Council is supported in its work by a small team of employed staff known as 'officers'. Currently the Council has the following staff:

- **Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (37 hours)** – the Town Clerk manages the team and oversees all the Council's assets and projects and is the legally appointed 'proper officer' for the Council, who must carry out the functions required by law and issue all statutory notifications, as well as being responsible for the proper administration of the Council's governance and finances.
- **Deputy Town Clerk (28 hours)** – the Deputy Town Clerk deputizes for the Town Clerk and takes primary responsibility for special projects such as the Summer First Aid Station, Seaton Beach School, 'Streetbase' Seaton, Seaton's Platinum Jubilee celebration and working with EDDC on gaining Blue Flag status for Seaton and improving disability access on the seafront.

- **Planning Clerk (4 hours)** – the Planning Clerk supports the Council in its capacity as a statutory consultee on planning applications.
- **Facilities & Projects Officer (37 hours)** – this is a new role, created in 2022, to lead on the day-to-day management of the Council’s buildings and lands and working with the Town Clerk on major projects such as the possible relocation of the town’s Museum and replacement of the Town Hall’s central heating systems.
- **Administration & Community Events Officer (24 hours)** – the Administration & Community Events Officer runs the Council’s reception and the tourist information service. She also manages the Council’s allotments and leads on small events such as Seaton in Bloom and the Beach Clean.
- **Town Maintenance Officer (37 hours)** – the Town Maintenance Officer is responsible for regular inspections of the town’s play parks to ensure their safety, the general maintenance of the Council’s assets and buildings and the installation of the Christmas lights. Recent projects have included the rebuilding of the seafront planter various repairs to the allotment site’s bridges, tracks and drains and installation of numerous benches and planters across the town.

4. [What does the Council do?](#)

In East Devon there are three tiers of local government, each with different responsibilities:

- **Seaton Town Council (STC)** is the first tier and has an important role to play in maintaining local assets and supporting the work of different groups within our community.
- **East Devon District Council (EDDC)** is the second tier and has the responsibility for services such as planning, housing, rubbish collection and street cleaning.
- **Devon County Council (DDC)** is the third tier and has the responsibility for services such as highways, education, and social services.

STC only has jurisdiction over the various buildings and land that it owns and maintains. These include:

- Cliff Field Gardens

- Seaton Down Hill
- Underfleet Play Park
- Elizabeth Road, including the play park, Martial Arts Centre & Scout Hut
- Seaton Allotments
- Seaton Town Hall (occupied by the Gateway Theatre Company and Axe Valley Heritage Association)
- Marshlands Centre (including the Tourist Information Centre)

It also provides, maintains and replaces, as required, numerous planters, benches, notice boards and other infrastructure across the town and arranges, organizes and funds the planting and watering of all the town's floral displays. Increasingly, it works in partnership with EDDC to benefit the town – recent examples, include the outdoor gym, two water refill stations, sensory garden and picnic tables on the cliff top adjacent to Cliff Field Gardens, which were funded by STC and installed and maintained by EDDC.

Furthermore, STC has assumed responsibility for the installation and funding of the annual Christmas lights and supports or funds other ad hoc events, community ventures and projects. It also provides substantial assistance to the Gateway Theatre Company by way of providing the building on a peppercorn rent and making a significant contribution towards the upkeep of the building.

The Council also uses its best endeavours to influence and encourage EDDC and DCC to take forward larger projects which affect the town, such as the seafront enhancement scheme and the Stop Line Way.

5. Financial Information

The Council has few income generating assets and therefore its primary source of funding is the 'precept' which is the local tax levied by the Council and collected on its behalf by East Devon District Council as part of residents' council tax bills. As from 1 April 2022, a sum of £121.32 per year (based on a Band D property) of each resident's council tax contributes to this precept. This equates to £2.33 per week. The Council's budget can be viewed on the Council's website.

Income

The precept for 2022-23 is set at £389,187. The Council currently has a small income over and above the precept from renting land and buildings to local groups and occasional grants awarded for specific projects.

Expenditure

The Council's primary items of expenditure are:

- running the tourist information service
- maintenance of the open spaces, buildings and other assets detailed above, in particular the Town Hall, which is leased to the Gateway Theatre Company on a peppercorn rent
- provision and maintenance of the town's floral displays
- grant funding for community groups
- provision of Christmas lights
- staffing and core administration costs
- ad hoc special projects (first aid station, youth projects, water refill stations, art trail, marketing the town, cleaning the sea wall, funding outdoor gym, sensory garden, Summer beach school)

6. Key Actions

These are the things which the current Council would like to achieve, which have been split into sections:

- Municipal Year – May 2022 – May 2023
- Longer term – 2023 – 2026

The general aims have been divided into four broad areas of work:

- **Economy & tourism** – to work actively with local stakeholders, insofar as the Council’s powers and finances permit, to support the local economy and promote tourism.
- **Community** – to maximise benefit to the community by working closely with other stakeholders in the town. The Council will model and share good practice through its own role as an employer, landlord and provider of community assets
- **Environment** – to protect the town’s natural heritage and improve and enhance its built environment for future generations, whilst minimising its use of plastic and reusing and recycling items wherever possible
- **Other** – to ensure the ongoing good governance and efficiency of the Council, thereby providing best value and resilience for the town

It should be noted that these projects are over and above the general operational work of the Council which takes up much of existing officers’ time. The Plan will be reviewed regularly, particularly during the budget setting process, to ensure budgetary requirements are in place as necessary to achieve the following year’s aims.

In order to progress as a Council and implement projects over and above those detailed herein, further staff will be required. In particular, the Council is mindful of the need to ‘future-proof’ the work it does on the town’s amenities by increasing capacity over and above existing amenities staff as well as considering the appointment of staff to improve on community engagement, events and activities.

Shorter Term Aims (Municipal Year 2022 - 2023)

Some of the following projects are already ongoing and others will be commenced in the coming municipal year, having already been the subject of earlier Council decisions and budgetary allocation:

Project	Timescale	
Art Trail Phases 2 & 3 – to complete installations. Phase 2 an artist has been commissioned and the artworks will be installed once weather permits. Phase 3 – to work on next phase with a local volunteer, who is curating the art trail – Andrew Gwynn Davies	Phase 2	May 2022
	Phase 3	March 2023
Marshlands Maintenance & Museum – in partnership with the Axe Valley Heritage Association, to begin the progress of	Working Group Meetings	Quarterly
	Project plan inc. budgets	July 2022

investigating further the possibility of relocating the town museum. To arrange regular meetings of the working group, liaison with the Museum Officer at DCC, developing a project plan, start seeking quotations from structural engineers and, subsequently for construction works for repairs to roof, replacement of lift and general constructions works towards moving Museum	DCC Museum Officer liaison	Summer 2022
	Structural engineers' quotations	Summer 2022
	Commissioning structural engineers' report	September 2022
	Construction quotations	Spring 2023
First Aid Station – to deliver the first aid station in 2022	Summer 2022	
Blue Flag - working with EDDC to gain Blue Flag status	Easter 2023	
Public conveniences - to engage with EDDC and research and prepare a report into the possible acquisition, maintenance and ongoing cleaning costs of the existing public conveniences at Marsh Road and Thury Harcourt and whether, if the Town Council took either of these blocks on, there would be a possibility of them being repaired and updated by EDDC as part of their capital repairs programme before such a transfer	August 2022	
Tourist Information Centre – to open and run the new TIC at Marshlands and to recruit new staff as appropriate	Open and run TIC	Ongoing
	Recruit new staff	September 2022
Youth Genesis Project - to build on the 'Seaton Streetbase' youth project and assess how it might be improved/progressed	Ongoing	
Summer beach school pilot programme – to work with the approved supplier to fund and deliver a summer beach school for local children, as a pilot for future schemes	Achieve grant funding	Application pending
	Deliver beach school	Summer 2022
Jurassic Fibre – to finalise the licence and secure the fee of £12,000	Summer 2022	
Sensory Garden – working with EDDC and other community stakeholders to complete sensory garden in Seafield Gardens for all ages to enjoy.	Completion by Summer 2022	
Income generation - research into available grant funding for different projects. To follow up all opportunities for income	Grant opportunities	Ongoing
	Hire of land	Ongoing

generation from assets, including refreshment sales from Seaton Down Hill		
Events:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Lights – to look at best options for either entering into a further 3-year contract for Christmas lights or creating a set of columns for the Council to own. Work with community groups to deliver another successful event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 2022 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor Cinema – to deliver an outdoor cinema event for 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2022 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platinum Jubilee Celebration – to work with voluntary groups in the town to deliver community celebration in Cliff Field Gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2022 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks - to investigate further the possibility of a firework display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2022 	
Community Grants – to encourage engagement with the scheme to ensure maximum benefit to local eligible groups. The level of community grants awarded during 2021/22 stands at £7,920. It is hoped the amount awarded can be increased in 2022-23	Ongoing	
Community Engagement Strategy – to prepare and implement a policy to improve communications with the community	Summer 2022	
Volunteer programme – to develop a volunteer policy/register to increase volunteer involvement in improving the town and increase community cohesion	April 2022	
Disability access to beach – to work with EDDC and help fund a pilot beach accessibility project to improve beach access for wheelchairs, with a view to a larger scheme being implemented depending on the results of the pilot	Summer 2023	
Improved disability access to West Walk Public Toilets – to work with EDDC to improve accessibility	Summer 2023	

Town Hall – lease negotiations are ongoing to ensure the lease is fit for purpose for both landlord and tenant. In line with the Council's resolution of 7 February 2022, the lease variation has been placed on hold for the time being and will be revisited later in the municipal year. In the meantime, to work with the Gateway on seeking quotations for specialist advice and thereafter the cost of replacing central heating system	Lease variation	Winter 2022
	Quotations	Summer 2022
	Commission of works	This will be dependant upon the outcome of the quotations.
Rewilding/trees – to identify further open spaces for rewilding and planting of trees.	Ongoing	
Litter picking/beach cleaning stations – provision of stations to improve the environment	Summer 2022	
Floral displays – to increase floral displays and funding thereof by business sponsorship.	Summer 2022	
Climate change review & improvements – to carry out a review of what action the Council could realistically take to counter the effects of climate change and how it could assist in achieving 'Plastic Free Seaton'. Install new recycling bins and a possible beach toy 'library' to reduce the purchase of new plastic toys and nets	Review	By Spring 2023
	Toy library	Summer 2022
Comprehensive review of litter and bins in the town and investigate the cost of provision and emptying of more recycling bins and more bins generally	New bins – depending on the conclusions of the review	Summer 2023
SW in Bloom – to take necessary action during 2022/23 in readiness to submit an application in 2024	Ongoing	
Seafront enhancements – Members will continue to lobby EDDC regarding the redevelopment of the Moridunum and wider redevelopment of the seafront and to make such smaller improvements to the seafront as are feasible within available budgets	Ongoing by Members	

CCLA Investments – to research and take advice as to whether the Council’s finance would be better served by investing in funds, rather than retaining monies purely in Treasurer’s Account	Autumn 2022
Asset management schedules – once quotations are available, the preparation of asset maintenance schedules and related budgets for the next 2 years	Autumn 2022

Longer Term Aims (2023 - 2026)

The following are both ongoing projects and proposals arising from the community consultation and further decisions will be made as part of the budget setting process in Autumn 2021 as to which to progress during the following financial year and beyond:

Project	Timescale
Art Trail – Phase 4 – depending on the success of Phase 3, to establish a fourth phase to include an ‘art trail map	2024
Town Map – to develop a simple town plan for visitors to encourage them to explore all of the town, possibly tying in the Art Trail	2023
Museum project – ongoing work to obtain funding and progress this project.	Ongoing
Income generation – to increase available income, other than the precept, to develop the town by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of a policy for letting of the Council’s assets - research into available grant funding for different projects 	Ongoing

- possible asset transfers or acquisitions such as beach huts	
Maintaining community grants programme	Ongoing
Events – where, feasible to run more events in the town including such events as SW in Bloom	Ongoing
Youth provision – continue to work in partnership with Youth Genesis to engage with young people, understand their needs and develop youth provision in the town	Ongoing
Ongoing maintenance and improvement of play equipment - to ensure the longevity of the town’s play areas and to develop a maintenance and replacement programme and associated fund	Ongoing
Marshlands – continuing the programme of works at Marshlands to ensure compliance with all safety and regulatory requirements and the safety of all visitors. To investigate how the Harbour Road-side might be best utilised to serve the community and generate income.	Ongoing
Seaton Hole Telephone Box – to refurbish the telephone box as a community project	Ongoing
Marshlands – to consider how the building can be made ‘greener’, for instance with the installation of solar panels	
Floral displays – to increase floral displays by increasing business sponsorship.	Ongoing
SW in Bloom – to take necessary action during 2022/23 in readiness to submit an application in 2024	Ongoing
Climate Change – to implement the findings of the climate change review in order to work towards achieving ‘Plastic Free Seaton’. This work will build on the work started in 2022/23	Ongoing
Seafront enhancements – Members will continue to lobby EDDC regarding the redevelopment of the Moridunum and wider redevelopment of the seafront and to make such smaller improvements to the seafront as are feasible within available	Ongoing

budgets (such as cleaning the seawall, additional planters and benches, and working with EDDC to pilot the disabled beach access project	
Relocation of bus stop (The Vault) – to look at possibility of relocating bus stop to improve access	2023/24
General power of competence – to provide greater flexibility in the work the Council does	May 2023 (next elections)
Local Council Awards – to ensure the Council’s governance, financial management and community engagement continues to be of sufficient standard that it is ready to apply for Quality Award status after the next elections in 2023, when 2/3 of the Council is elected	May 2023
Training & Development – to ensure the continuing professional development of staff as required, to ensure they bring best value in their roles	Ongoing
Staffing – to keep staffing structures under review and build on resilience of existing team	Ongoing

7. Conclusions

This Plan is intended to provide realistic short and longer term aims that can be delivered by the Council and built-on by future administrations. It is a living document that will be reviewed regularly to ensure fitness for purpose.